In the claims:

For the Examiner's convenience, all pending claims are presented below with changes shown. Please cancel claims 1, 2, 9, 10, 17, 18 and 25-29 without prejudice.

1-2.   (Cancelled)

3.   (Currently Amended) A ~~The~~ method ~~of claim 2, further~~ comprising:

retrieving a first vendor identifier (ID) from a table;

retrieving a second vendor ID from the table; and

generating a virtual ID by randomizing the first vendor ID and the second vendor

ID, including:

rotating the first vendor ID and the second vendor ID by a predetermined amount

to form a rotated ID; and

performing a logical exclusive-or of the rotated ID with a predetermined number

retrieving a value from a counter;

rotating the counter value to form a rotated counter value; and

performing a logical exclusive-or of the rotated counter value with the virtual ID.

4.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 3, wherein the counter value is based-upon an activation time.

5.   (Currently Amended) A ~~The~~ method ~~of claim 1, further~~ comprising:

retrieving a first vendor identifier (ID) from a table;

retrieving a second vendor ID from the table; and

generating a virtual ID by randomizing the first vendor ID and the second vendor

ID;

retrieving a third vendor ID from the table;

rotating the third vendor ID by a predetermined amount to form a second rotated

ID; and

performing a logical exclusive-or of the second rotated ID with the virtual ID.

6.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 5 1, further comprising:

extracting the first vendor ID from a world wide name identifying a first device;

and

extracting the second vendor ID from a world wide name identifying a second

device.

7.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 6, wherein: the first device and

the second device comprise physical devices.

8.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 3, wherein the counter is

incremented using a timer routine.

9-10.   (Cancelled)

11.   (Currently Amended) An The apparatus comprising of claim 10, wherein:

a table to store two or more vendor identifiers (IDs); and

circuitry to retrieve a second vendor ID from the table; and

circuitry to retrieve a first vendor ID and a second vendor ID from the table and to

generate a virtual ID by randomizing the first vendor ID and the second vendor ID;

circuitry to rotate the first vendor ID and the second vendor ID by a

predetermined amount to form a rotated ID and perform a logical exclusive-or of the

rotated ID with a predetermined number; and

the circuitry ~~further retrieves~~ to retrieve a value from a counter, rotates the counter

value to form a rotated counter value and performs a logical exclusive-or of the rotated

counter value with the virtual ID.

12.   (Previously Presented)   The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the counter

value is based upon an activation time.

13.   (Currently Amended) An ~~The~~ apparatus comprising ~~of claim 9, wherein~~

        a table to store two or more vendor identifiers (IDs); and

        circuitry to retrieve a second vendor ID from the table; and

        circuitry to retrieve a first vendor ID and a second vendor ID from the table and to

generate a virtual ID by randomizing the first vendor ID and the second vendor ID; and

        ~~wherein the~~ circuitry ~~further retrieves~~ to retrieve a third vendor ID from the table,

rotates the third vendor ID by a predetermined amount to form a second rotated ID and

performs a logical exclusive-or of the second rotated ID with the virtual ID.

14.   (Previously Presented)   The apparatus of claim 13, wherein: the circuitry is

also capable of extracting the first vendor ID from a world wide name identifying a first

device; and extracting the second vendor ID from a world wide name identifying a

second device.

15.   (Previously Presented)   The apparatus of claim 14, wherein the first device

and the second device comprise physical devices.

16. (Previously Presented)   The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the counter is incremented using a timer routine.

17-18. (Cancelled)

19. (Currently Amended) An ~~The~~ article ~~of claim 18, further~~ comprising:

retrieving a first vendor identifier (ID) from a table;

retrieving a second vendor ID from the table; and

generating a virtual ID by randomizing the first vendor ID and the second vendor ID, including:

rotating the first vendor ID and the second vendor ID by a predetermined amount to form a rotated ID; and

performing a logical exclusive-or of the rotated ID with a predetermined number retrieving a value from a counter;

rotating the counter value to form a rotated counter value; and

performing a logical exclusive-or of the rotated counter value with the virtual ID.

20. (Previously Presented)   The article of claim 19, wherein the counter value is based upon an activation time.

21. (Currently Amended) The article of claim 19 ~~17~~, wherein the instructions when executed also result in:

retrieving a third vendor ID from the table;

rotating the third vendor ID by a predetermined amount to form a second rotated ID;

performing a logical exclusive-or of the second rotated ID with the virtual ID.

22.   (Currently Amended) The article of claim 19 17, wherein the instructions when executed also result in: extracting the first vendor ID from a world wide name identifying a first device; and

extracting the second vendor ID from a world wide name identifying a second device.

23.   (Previously Presented)   The article of claim 22, wherein: the first device and the second device comprise physical devices.

24.   (Previously Presented)   The article of claim 19, wherein the counter is incremented using a timer routine.

25.   (Previously Presented)   A system comprising:

a circuit board comprising a circuit card slot; and

a circuit card capable of being inserted into the slot, the circuit card comprising:

a table to store two or more vendor identifiers (IDs); and

circuitry to retrieve a first vendor ID and a second vendor ID from the table and to generate a virtual ID by randomizing the first vendor ID and the second vendor ID.

26.   (Original)   The system of claim 25, wherein: the circuit board also comprises a processor coupled to a bus; and the circuit card slot is also coupled to the bus.

27.   (Previously Presented)   The system of claim 25, wherein: the first vendor ID corresponds to a first redundant array of inexpensive disk (RAID) and the second vendor ID corresponds to a second RAID.

28. (Previously Presented)   The system of claim 27, wherein: the circuit card is coupled to the first RAID and the second RAID.

29. (Previously Presented)   The system of claim 25, wherein: the circuit card is coupled to the first RAID and the second RAID via a network.